





the term "extensive" disassembly involves more than a minor amount of disassembly of components as opposed to a substantial amount of disassembly.

The claims stand rejected on a number of prior art grounds. More specifically, claims 1-3, 7-10, 16-18, 20-22, 26, 27, 38-43, 46, 48,-50, stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Checa (U.S. Patent 5,205,387). Claims 14 and 15 stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Checa '387 in view of Feigler (U.S. Patent 5,284,233). Claims 23-25 and 33, stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Checa ('387), in view of Babcock (U.S. Patent 4,995,492). Claims 34, 35, 44 and 45, stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Checa ('387), in view of Albers et al. (U.S. 5,135,091). Claim 37 stands further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Checa ('387) in view of Jackel et al. (U.S. Patent 6,450,314).

Applicants traverse each of these rejections on the following grounds. The Examiner contends that the presently claimed invention is anticipated by U.S. patent No. 5,205,387 based upon the Examiner's contention that this reference discloses a separable connection inside the clutch bell housing. In contrast to the present invention, this separable connection is positioned directly between the two housing components of the clutch bell housing. However and according to the present design, the point of separation is located between the release bearing and the housing cover 7 of the clutch. On this basis, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention includes a novel arrangement of components.

Applicants believe that a brief summary of the present invention is in order and would assist the Examiner. One object of the invention consists in separating the engine from the transmission, i.e., the release device from the clutch cover, during repair operations, so that the clutch can be unthreaded from the clutch shaft. The problem that is encountered and results from further improvements to vehicles is that the accessible clutch space has become increasingly smaller, hence it has become increasingly difficult to perform repairs in such a way that will allow the fewest possible number of components to be disassembled.



In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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~~Respectfully submitted,~~

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